

Pre-Solicitation Meeting Summary

February 2, 2010

Gary Stith, Deputy Director, Montgomery County Department of General Services (DGS) welcomed everyone and introduced representatives of other agencies involved in the RFQ that may be useful as resources:

County Representatives:

- **Rick Siebert**, Montgomery County Parking Lot District, (PLD);
Rick.Siebert@MontgomerycountyMD.gov
- **Corinne Rothblum**, Montgomery County Economic Development
Corinne.Rothblum@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov
- **Natalie Cantor**, Director, Mid-County Regional Center
Natalie.Cantor@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov
- **Carol McKenzie**, Deputy Director, Mid-County Regional Center
Carol.McKenzie@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov
- **Sharon Lasswell**, Wheaton Redevelopment Staff (Capital Projects)
Sharon.Lasswell@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov
- **Pete McGinnity**, Wheaton Redevelopment Staff (Small Business Development and Retention); Peter.McGinnity@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov
- **Roylene Roberts**, Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Roylene.Roberts@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Representatives:

- **Steve Goldin**, Director of Real Estate sgoldin@wmata.com
- **Gary Malasky**, Director of Property Development gmalasky@wmata.com
- **Bob Burns**, Sr. Development Specialist rburns@wmata.com

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)

- **Sandra Tallant**, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) – with Planning (Sector Plan) Sandra.Tallant@MNCPPC-mc.org
- **Mark Riley**, Deputy Director of Parks for M-NCPPC Mark.Riley@MNCPPC-MC.org

Maryland Dept. of Transportation Representatives

- **Brian Greenan**, Coordinator, Transit-oriented Development
bgreenan@mdot.state.md.us

Owners of Privately-Owned Properties: There are some areas in the Wheaton CBD where significant pieces of property have been put together and assembled privately. The County will not use the Urban Renewal process to aggregate property as it did in Silver Spring. Mr. Stith introduced the following property owners who were present:

- **Jim Agliata** Vice President of Development, Westfield, LLC
jagliata@westfield.com – largest property owner in Wheaton; Westfield is working to bring Costco to the mall; a Goal of redevelopment is improved connectivity

- between Westfield and the “core” area of the downtown
- Harold Weinberg, Principal, Miles Realty Company, Inc.
haroldw@milesrealty.com - owns property on Blugeridge Avenue, near Lot 14
- David Aaronson, Wheaton Center daarons@wcl.american.edu - owns property around Lot 5, to the west and south
- The Levin Family – owns a significant portion of the block to the west of Lot 13, across Grandview Avenue
- Greenhill Realty kcoakley@greenhillcompanies.com - owns property throughout downtown Wheaton
- Chris Lindsay with Lindsay Ford CLin65@aol.com - owns property located in the northwest quadrant of Veirs Mill Rd. and University Blvd.

Other:

- **Greg Baker**, Chair of the Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee (WRAC), which is comprised of business and property owners and community residents

Steve Goldin, Director of Real Estate for WMATA thanked the attendees for their interest in the Request for Qualifications and made the following points:

- Metro may have had a bad reputation in the development community in the past, but he and his staff are there to help and to make things happen; WMATA wants to be a development partner
- Two of WMATA’s top people will be working on this project - Gary Malasky and Bob Burns; they are rolling out a new joint development process and initiative at Metro—well beyond Wheaton.
- In the new RFQ/RFP process the development community will have a seat at the table throughout the project.
- Emphasis is being placed on financial strength and ability to commit equity to site assemblage.
- The secret to making this project a success is the small unique shops.
- As to their garage, WMATA is working on shared parking at their commuter decks with adjacent private uses.

PowerPoint Presentation - by Mr. Stith - The RFQ is available on the DGS website - [Click here for presentation](#)

Highlights:

- Wheaton today;
- Goals;
- Tools for Redevelopment: Enterprise Zone Designation; Arts and Entertainment Designation; Governor’s Smart Site Designation; Wheaton Urban District; Wheaton Parking Lot District and Transportation Management District.
- Wheaton Map showing the various districts – most of the public properties included in the RFQ are located in all of these districts.
- Public Parcels – in the RFQ we have included all the public properties in downtown Wheaton. You can pick and choose what properties you are interested in developing. The County would expect a comprehensive approach to developing the “core” area.

That would include Parking Lot 13, the Mid-County Regional Center and the WMATA properties to be developed as a singular project, portions of which could be appropriately phased. Redevelopment of the “core” of Wheaton is very critical to declaring Wheaton successful.

There may be an opportunity to develop Parcel #8 Veteran’s Park which is owned by M-NCPPC. However, the County Executive and M-NCPPC will not allow that park to be eliminated. It could be replaced on another piece of public property. While this park has very little use throughout the year, the feedback from various Veterans Groups indicates the redevelopment of this parcel may be very controversial.

- List of the Montgomery County, M-NCPPC and Metro properties. The Regional Service Center houses certain functions that can not go away and would need to be accommodated somehow in the redevelopment of downtown Wheaton. The County will work with developers as to how that can be accomplished.
- Development Process Overview;
- RFQ Schedule with dates. The reason the County chose to do an RFQ is it is less expensive to the developer than an RFP. The process the County is looking for is for the developer to develop a concept in conjunction with the public partners and the community. In Phase II, financials, as well as more detail will be asked for and will also include an interview. Phase II submission deadlines will be provided to the short list selected in Phase I. The County hopes to have someone selected by June.
- Evaluation Criteria - make sure the information and material submitted addresses this criteria.
- The Development Team will have strong input in the development of the Sector Plan that is currently being updated.
- Most properties in the RFQ are in the PLD – parking will be a critical issue in the redevelopment of downtown Wheaton;
- WRAC members will work closely with the Development Team

Gary Malasky – WMATA

- In valuing the bus bay property, WMATA’s process is to discount the value of the property to accommodate the cost of what needs to be done to relocate the bus bays.
- The Bus Bays do not have to stay at their current location, however they do have to be very proximate to the Metro Rail Station entrance.
- The Garage is needed for commuter parking, however a different kind of use that has been mentioned was retail facing the front of the garage. If that is done, replacement parking will be needed (at the cost of the development community).

PowerPoint Presentation on the Sector Plan Process and Status – by Sandra Tallant

[click her for presentation](#)

Highlights:

- Sector Plan staff draft will go to the Planning Board in April and will go to the county Council in early 2011;
- Map of the study area; Wheaton in 1952 and Wheaton today;
- Supportive community; great small businesses and events;
- Build on Wheaton’s music culture, ethnic food and shopping;

- Wheaton's economy/land use; residential; office; retail;
- Development Envelope;
- Transportation;
- Wheaton Tomorrow – some considerations: a covered market; art, other mixed-use development;
- Improve the Public Realm;
- Open Space Network; neighborhoods;
- Wheaton today;
- Slides of the various Squares in Wheaton;
- In 2000 a Charrette was done to begin to look at what downtown Wheaton could be;
- Environmental improvement will be made incrementally through redevelopment;
- Wheaton Development Opportunities;
- Development Activity underway; and
- Wheaton Sector Plan 2010 Schedule

Questions and Answers: A tour of the downtown will follow the question and answer session for those interested in participating. [Click here for tour map](#)

Q. Is there a program statement for what functions would have to be replaced in the Regional Service Center?

A. *The County is working on that and will provide that information to the Development Team. It's primarily Health and Human Services functions – many under contract through non-profit organizations, as well as the Regional Services Office/Urban District. It isn't necessary that all the functions in the Regional Service Center stay together, but a one-stop-shop may have an advantage that the County might want to pursue. A more detailed "Program of Requirements" will be put together.*

Q. Is the Mid-County Regional Center one of the properties listed?

A. *Yes it is.*

Q. If the developer is relocating the bus bays, are they responsible for finding the new location for the bus bays?

A. *Yes.*

Q. If the County goes through the development process, is WMATA going to consider selling their property?

A. *WMATA's Board has expressed a preference for long-term ground leases, which is typical unless it is a condo development.*

Q. Is the planning being done by the County?

A. *No – The County will be in partnership with the Developer(s) selected by this RFQ process to do the planning for this redevelopment. The Development Partner will actually be in control of the planning process for the redevelopment. They will hire their team, and part of the County's review will be not only their (the Developer's) experience and qualifications, but also their design team's experience and qualifications.*

Q. The RFQ mentions there is a new Comprehensive Plan – is that in place yet?

A. *No, it's currently in process.*

Q. The RFQ does anticipate there could be teams meeting the criteria?

A. *Yes. We are not only looking at the consultants, but emphasis will be on who is leading that team and the developer.*

Q. Will Work Force Housing still be a requirement, given the County is stepping back from that?

A. *As of today, Work Force Housing is still a requirement in downtown Wheaton. The Council is considering making Work Force Housing an optional program. The County is very interested in Work Force Housing and will work with the developer(s) to see if it can be done, but if the Council bill goes through it will not be a legal requirement.*

Q. How do you envision the coordination and continuity of multiple development teams?

A. *The coordination function will be part of the County's responsibility and they will work with M-NCPPC on doing that. The County is not interested in finding someone to be the Master Planner for all of downtown Wheaton. The County would be interested in a different character or a different feel for different parts of downtown Wheaton, and we can accomplish that with different development teams. Smaller projects give smaller developers the ability to demonstrate success. It is not anticipated that all the projects will happen at once. The County would welcome that opportunity.*

Q. The RFQ talks about the Parking Lot District (PLD) establishing fair market value for purchasing PLD properties. Does the PLD have the same position WMATA has where it would discount the cost of the replacement parking you put in from the fair market value of the land?

A. *In public/private partnerships, the provision of structured parking to replace the surface parking can be determined to be equal to fair market value. The PLD would generally expect to receive an asset in return for selling the actual property. The PLD is most likely not interested in selling the property and having the value of the property go against parking to be owned by the private developer. Metro, in contrast, would be interested in looking at something like that.*

Q. Is there a reason why the large WMATA parcel next to Centex is not part of this?

A. *It is not part of the "core", but can be discussed separately with WMATA. Mr. Stith mentioned that Avalon Bay might be interested in discussing a different option for their large piece of property at Georgia and Blueridge Avenues, which is next to the WMATA parcel that borders Centex.*

Q. Are there any parcels in the "core" that are considered required for your response or will have a higher value than others?

A. *Mr. Stith could not answer the “value” question, but the County is very interested in the redevelopment of the “core” because the community is not going to feel that dedevelopment is accomplished in Wheaton until we have dealt with the “core”. The ULI Technical Assistance Panel felt it would be wiser for the County to defer offering the public properties associated with the “core” to increase their value, but the County doesn’t necessarily want to do that. Given community expectations, the County felt it was important to include the “core” properties now. However, the County believes the “core” needs to be dealt with comprehensively, and it would be less receptive to a response that only addresses Lot 13 and does not include the WMATA Bus Bay property.*

Q. Does the County have an anticipated number of developers they are looking to work with?

A. *The Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Report suggested that the County group parcels where it made sense to do so. The County structured the RFQ so there are three distinct areas, which allows for consideration of developing some, rather than all, the parcels offered.*

Q. Will more points be given to a developer interested in doing all three areas?

A. *No. It would be more attractive to have multiple developers. Single use developers are encouraged to partner with some of the smaller developers with experience in doing mixed-use development and be able to create a rich mix. The County is looking for mixed-use, higher density development.*

Q. In summary, most of the County properties are parking lots, will the developer have to provide replacement parking?

A. *It is most likely they will, because many of the small businesses can not provide their own parking and the County still has some obligation to meet their (small businesses) needs. The County anticipates that shared parking through a public facility would be necessary. Based on the scope of a proposed project, it could even be more, it could be less. The PLD will help make that determination.*

Q. Will M-NCPPC change the zoning in the Master Plan?

A. *M-NCPPC is currently evaluating the FAR in each block and looking at some of the new tools. They anticipate a proposal in some cases for changing zoning, especially those that are the C-O Zone. It’s unclear if the Planning Board is interested in retaining the CBD Zone or transitioning that property to the CR Zone. In some cases, there is a preference for the CR Zone because of the reduced open space requirement which can be very difficult to obtain in some urban areas.*

Q. Will a list be available of who attended the Pre-Solicitation meeting?

A. *Yes, the County will place the list on the DGS website, as well as the PowerPoint presentations by Mr. Stith and by Ms. Tallant and the walking tour map.*